



NACCHO

National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation

Media Release

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Aboriginal Health Budget Welcomed: but where's the community controlled sector?

Dr Mick Adams, chair of NACCHO, the peak body for Aboriginal community controlled medical services has welcomed the government's budget announcements for Aboriginal health which primarily put in place the COAG announcements from last November.

Dr Adams said "The emphasis in the COAG package on chronic disease, strengthening primary health care services, training, access to specialists, access to medicines and prevention programs are all welcome"

"New measures announced last night include \$131m over three years for Aboriginal health services in the NT, \$58m for improving ear and eye services over four years, \$11m over four years for dental health in rural and regional areas and \$13.8m over four years for Stolen Generation link up services.

"Incentives to encourage health professionals to work in remote areas along with other initiatives may help our services there recruit and retain staff. The means test for the private health insurance rebate and extra funding for public hospitals are also welcomed.

"However NACCHO is concerned over aspects of the COAG package where Aboriginal community controlled health services are being marginalised in favour of Aboriginal health funding going to mainstream GP services most of which never see Aboriginal clients.

"Aboriginal community controlled health services have over thirty years experience providing frontline primary health care in urban, regional and remote areas.

"If the Government is committed to the Close the Gap Statement of Intent it signed in March 2008 it is imperative to establish a partnership with NACCHO in setting Aboriginal health priorities.

"International examples show the greatest advances in closing the gap will be made when Aboriginal peoples have genuine control of their lives and over the design and delivery of their health services" Dr Adams said.

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